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News

Distance ed program wins top ACCC honours

A George Brown distance education program has won the prestigious Award for Program Excellence from the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC). The award, which will be presented at the association conference in Winnipeg in May, is for the Electronics Technician certificate program developed by Colin Simpson, Director of the college's Centre for Learning Innovations and Academic Development (LIAD).

"It's a terrific honour," says Simpson. "To be recognized by our peers in this way really helps establish George Brown as a leader in distance education." Other LIAD staff instrumental in delivering the program currently include Brenda Yip, Lisa Vieira and student tutor Angelo Voulakis.

Only one award for Program Excellence is presented annually by the association, drawing from nominations received from more than 170 member institutions across the country. Judging is based on six criteria: innovation, portability, long-term sustainability, effectiveness, participation throughout the institution and efficiency in meeting objectives.

Interactive learning on CD-ROM

Introduced in fall 1996, the Electronics Technician distance education certificate program uses a CD-ROM interactive learning package to cover first-year electronics theory. Telephone access to a tutor is also provided.

A special feature is the simulated electronics laboratory, using Electronics Workbench software from Interactive Image Technologies. The virtual lab lets students design circuitry, perform tests and work with electronic equipment as though they were in a real electronics workshop.

Designed for easy access

The program was designed to reach students who cannot attend college full-time because of work or family commitments. No electronics background is required and there are no



The second annual Casino and Dance for Student Bursaries scored an outstanding success February 27, with twice as many people attending as last year. Including the province's matching grant, the event raised a total of \$40,000 for student bursaries.

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Good news on grad employment

The latest George Brown graduate employment survey shows a substantial jump in employment figures overall. As of November 1997, 86 per cent of all grads surveyed were employed, compared with 76 per cent in 1996.

"Part of the increase is because of improved employment opportunities," says Judi Linton, Manager, Counselling, Career Services, Special Needs & Deaf Services. "We also made an all-out effort to contact more students in the most recent survey."

The upward swing in employment was felt in all the college's faculties. The biggest jump took place in Community Services, with 87 per cent employed in 1997 compared with 67 per cent a year earlier. Smaller increases were seen in Graphic Arts, up 15 per to 83 per cent; Health Sciences, up 9 points to 91 per cent; and Science & Technology, up 8 points to 81 per cent.

Taking the honours for highest employment figures were Theatre Arts, at 100 per cent (unchanged from 1996) and Hospitality & Tourism, at 98 per cent (up from 84 per cent).

The lowest total employment figures – a still-respectable 76 per cent – were found in Business programs, which also had the smallest change from the previous year – up 3 percentage points.

Fashion also showed little change at 84 per cent employment (up 5 points from 1996).

Some programs did particularly well in the latest survey. Instrumentation Engineering Technician and Early Childhood Assistant grads had a great deal more success in the job market this year. Other programs showing a jump of 20 percentage points or more in employment were: Activation Co-ordinator, Early Childhood Education, Fashion Management, Graphic Design, Human Services Counsellor and Mechanical Engineering Technician – Tool and Die.

Highest average salaries were reported in the Health Sciences area: \$29,731. Theatre Arts came in at the other end of the scale, with an average \$10,989 annual salary. Average earnings in most other program areas were in the \$20,000 to \$25,000 range, with the exception of Fashion, where salaries averaged \$16,638.

The survey was conducted by the Student Affairs Department, who will publish the data in a report for distribution in late April.

Information on placement by program is among the data all Ontario colleges, universities and vocational schools will have to provide to students beginning in September 1999, according to a recent announcement by the Minister of Education. (George Brown has been publishing these statistics for many years.) Other required information includes graduation rates and loan default rates for each program.

What they're saying about Electronics Technician distance education

"I am not one who enjoys a classroom setup and therefore this method of learning was very appealing to me. The idea of having a simulated workbench to test circuits and practise what was taught also contributed towards my decision to take this course. This saved me from purchasing expensive tools and equipment – for example, the various meters – and made it less costly to complete the entire course."

– STUDENT YVETTE PILLAY

"I am already an electronics technician but needed the written qualifications and papers to support my experience in this field. Having already covered some of this material some years ago, I find it an excellent and fairly easy way to refresh some of the more important concepts."

– STUDENT DESMOND PILLAY

"The Electronics CD-ROM program provides an excellent, flexible way for my employees to upgrade their skills. It's a professional package that meets our industry requirements."

– CHUCK HANSMAN, PRESIDENT,
TIMROC INDUSTRIES

"Colin worked to involve us in his program and to build on what we have spent much time and money to create. In so doing, he has made it a success for everyone involved. In acknowledging his achievement, the ACCC signals a strong commitment to building an even more vital public college system, better able to meet our own changing needs and with an increased ability to deliver high quality Canadian education worldwide."

– JOE KOENIG, PRESIDENT, INTERACTIVE IMAGE TECHNOLOGIES

Hospitality dean named

A hospitality executive and educator has been appointed dean of George Brown's Hospitality & Tourism Centre.

Ronald Thompson, who is currently working on his doctorate, has extensive experience in the hospitality industry as well as hospitality education. He has taught at Ryerson and Guelph universities, and has held a range of hospitality jobs over two decades ranging from cook to senior management.

He will spend ten days at the college in May and will join the college in July.

A more complete profile of Thompson will appear in a subsequent issue of City College News.

ACCC Award

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academic prerequisites, so anyone can get basic training for this growing industry.

Non-traditional learners are welcoming the program. More than 20 per cent of enrolled students are women, compared with only five per cent in classroom electronics programs. People with physical disabilities and hospitalized patients also find it useful, since they can don't have to travel to complete their lab work.

On-the-job training

The program is also valuable for on-the-job training and has been recognized by companies including Ontario Hydro, Northern Telecom, Johnson Equipment and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Customized versions have been developed for corporate clients including Molson's Breweries, Dofasco and General Motors.

Yet another – and large – group of students is those who have work experience but no academic credentials. The distance ed program is an effective way for them to gain a college certificate for career advancement or as a foundation for further formal learning.

To date, nearly 1,000 students have enrolled in the Electronics Technician distance education certificate program and just over 100 have graduated. That's a good record, given the program's newness and its expected average completion time of 10 to 12 months.

With more students signing up every day, it looks like it will be a George Brown best-seller – in addition to a national award winner!

Technology, Graphic Communications Welcome New Chairs

George Brown's reputation, together with its potential in the future, were key factors in attracting new chairs *Robert Barnett* and *Michael Maynard* to the college.

"Given the college's recent history of restructuring and strategic direction, there's an opportunity to have a real impact here, as opposed to a college that isn't in a rebuilding process," says *Barnett*, Chairman, Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Technologies.

For *Maynard*, chair of Graphic Communications, the appeal was the college's "huge potential to capitalize on its existing strengths and become a centre of excellence for both technical skill and creative thinking"

Both joined the college in January.

Barnett brings 20 years' experience in the telecommunications industry, where he was involved in employee training as well as operations. Based in Ottawa, he also served on advisory committees for Algonquin College's Network Cabling, Train the Trainer and Electronics Technician programs.

His career change to the educational field is a chance to make a difference, *Barnett* says. "When I was in industry, I saw the need for qualified graduates and for an articulation process that begins at an earlier level.

Students should be thinking about their careers in Grade 10 rather than at graduation."

For *Michael Maynard*, his new role is

"an opportunity to take 20 years' of teaching experience to another level, to look at the bigger picture". Most recently a professor of graphic design at Sheridan College, he's worked as a graphic designer in television and run his own design firm.

He's been instrumental in winning recognition for the graphic design profession on a number of levels. In 1984, he initiated the Ontario Student Graphic Design Awards. As a member of the Society of Graphic Designers of Ontario, he was active in the project that

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Way to Go! – George Brown Success Stories

Fitness & Lifestyle Management celebrates 25th

The Fitness and Lifestyle Management program has had a full schedule of events in this, its 25th year. A recent Fitness Exhibition drew more than 550 secondary students from 18 schools to experience exhibits, demonstrations and seminars. George Brown student *Jodi Ruel* initiated the event, which involved more than 50 other student volunteers from the program. An earlier Employment Fair, hosted by the program last November, resulted in over 100 placement interviews for the 30 graduating students. Now a three-year program, Fitness and Lifestyle Management is drawing new interest in the fitness community, reports professor *John Griffin*.

Campus WorkLink goes national

Campus WorkLink, the Internet-based job posting service for colleges and universities, has now gone nation-wide, reaching some 70 institutions and more than 1.2 million students. The service has been active at George Brown since it was launched as a pilot by five Metro-area colleges in December 1996.

The system is password-protected for each individual institution and passwords are distributed by the Career Centre. Students have free access, but a nominal fee is charged to employers, who can select which institutions they wish to carry their job postings.

At George Brown, 9,240 employers posted 11,882 jobs in 1997. Since January 1998, 1,265 employers have posted 2,132 jobs, with some salaries as high as \$75,000.

Any college department wanting to hire a George Brown student can post the position on Campus WorkLink for free. For further information, view the website at nrg.schoolnet.ca/worklink or call the Career and Counselling office at ext. 2107.

Red-letter day for Clerical Workers Centre

Friends from the college as well as other organizations turned out February 24 for the official opening of the Clerical Workers Centre, 365 Bloor St. East. Only one pair of scissors was used, says Manager *Shelley Acheson*, but representatives of all four partners in the project had a hand in the ribbon-cutting. They included *Michael Cooke*, Dean of Community Services and Health Sciences; *Pat Bird*, Times Change Women's Employment Service, Karen Lior, Advocates for Community-based Training and Education for Women; and Karen Hickling, Human Resources Development Canada. Joining the four on the speaker's list was *Sally Armstrong*, women's advocate and editor of *Homemakers Magazine*.

The Centre was created to help clerical workers, particularly women, deal with the huge transformation taking place in office work as a result of economic restructuring and technological change. It offers a variety of career-related workshops for participants receiving Employment Insurance benefits. Self-help facilities open to anyone include an information resource centre and a computer lab where workers can brush up on their skills in some of the most widely used business software packages. For more information, phone ext. 4610.

Rewards of awards

Awards worth \$75,000 are being given to Hospitality & Tourism students this spring in two separate ceremonies. On March 31, 33 awards were presented to students enrolled in programs of less than one year, based on faculty nominations. On April 14, students in post-secondary programs are being honoured with 43 awards, selected according to a variety of criteria including academic achievement, overall success potential and financial need. The evening's highlight is the Jamie Gillies Memorial Award, sponsored by the Keg Restaurants in memory of a George Brown College grad. Presented to the outstanding first-year student, the award covers full two-year tuition.

For the love of wine

Wine and food lovers all over town are signing up for the Friendly Wine Club, started by *Bjorn Rasmussen*, Hospitality professor specializing in wines. "It's different from some other clubs because it focuses on the marriage of food and wine, not just on wine appreciation," says *Rasmussen*. Monthly meetings aim for a relaxed, sociable atmosphere and alternate between full dinners and lighter buffets. Experts from the international world of wine speak regularly to the group and spring winery tours are being scheduled. Another George Brown connection: meetings are held at *Chicory Restaurant*, owned by partners *Matt Sharif-Pour* and *Jacqueline Ting*, graduates of the college. Although many of the club's members are from George Brown, anyone is welcome to join. To find out more, call *Bjorn Rasmussen* at ext. 2255.

established the new provincially-legislated designation of Registered Graphic Designer (RGD). In addition to being an RGD, *Maynard* is a Fellow of the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada and holds an MFA from York University.

Looking ahead, George Brown's two new chairs aim to bring their programs further in tune with today's needs.

"My first priority is to get our electrical/electronics and mechanical programs more involved with industry," says *Robert Barnett*. "I want to have three or four advisory groups organized and meeting by summer." New programs in automation, network cabling and surface mount technology are also on his 'to do' list.

In the longer term, he wants to create more crossover in content between mechanical and electrical/electronics, since those areas are merging in industry. Together with closer links with contract learning and continuing education, that would ensure more mobility for students throughout their education, *Barnett* says.

One-on-one meetings with faculty and staff are first on the agenda for *Michael Maynard*. He's organized a two day 'advance' (as opposed to retreat) aimed at achieving

Love is in the air

The nose knows when it comes to romance. That's the conclusion drawn in this year's Cost of Love survey conducted as a class project by George Brown marketing students.

Timed to coincide with Valentine's Day, the announcement of the survey's findings brought the college widespread attention from newspapers and radio stations across the country.

According to the student researchers, smelling good was picked by both men and women as the factor most directly leading to a kiss on a first date. A date who complimented them was the second most attractive factor for men. For women, it was a date who got them home safely.

Smell was the biggest turn-off for women – 70 per cent said body odour on a date would finish the relationship. For men, however, the real killer was a woman

who checked out other men on a date – seen by 95 per cent of guys as cause for ending the relationship. More tolerant (or more resigned?), only 57 per cent of women would reject a man for his wandering eye.

The sexes differed in their financial views, too. Seventy per cent of women said they expect dates to cost less than \$60, while 42 per cent of men expected to pay up to \$100. And nearly half the women – 43 per cent – said they prefer to split the bill, compared with less than a third of the men.

Happily for Cupid, the students found the cost of love is roughly the same this year as last: \$1,050, an amount that covers 10 dates including dinner, a movie and transportation. Helping to hold the line on costs were Canada's low inflation rate and the trade-offs between splitting bills and the cost of soap, hot water, deodorant and fragrance.

"renewed focus, trust and respect for each other's strengths."

A program review also lies ahead. "More than technical skills are needed by industry today," *Maynard* points out. "In the past, curriculum was driven by industry, focusing

on industry oriented tasks and goals. Now, industry is looking to the colleges to take a leadership role, providing training in problem-solving skills and creative thinking." Adding those elements to traditional design skills adds up to an exciting vision, he says.

CALENDAR

April 13 Staff seminar: *Upgrading to Office 97*, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Bell Lab, Casa Loma. Fax your registration to ext. 4768.

April 20 Staff seminar: *Microsoft Outlook*, 9 a.m. to 12 noon, Bell Lab, Casa Loma. Fax your registration to ext. 4768.

April 20 Public Career Planning Workshop, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., 200 King St. East, Room 128 (lecture theatre). Free, but advance registration required; call 415-2000, ext. 3444. Sponsored by the Communications and Marketing Department.

April 22 to May 2 *Spring Repertory Season* of George Brown Theatre School presents *Lilly, Alta.*, a Canadian drama by Kenneth Dyba, directed by Paul Thompson, and *The Lady From Maxim's*, a French farce by Georges Feydeau, directed by Paul Lampert. Tickets \$10; \$8 for students, seniors and George Brown staff; 530 King St. East. Call ext. 2167 for information and reservations.

April 22 to May 8 Professional Development Weeks focus on *Learning Challenges & Opportunities: Sharing Best Practices*. Sessions in week 1 include: *Preparing and Using Student Handouts*,

Increasing Student Motivation, Making Large Lectures Interactive, Preparing Lesson Plans, Managing Student Behaviour in the Classroom/Lab, Evaluating Your Teaching, Writing Learning Outcomes, Developing Written Tests, Starting Off on the Right Foot, The 7-7 Semester, Online Learning - A Primer. In week 2, sessions include: *Teaching and Assessing Critical Thinking, GBC's Electronic Resource Library, Inclusive Learning Environments, Harnessing the Millennium, Communication for Passion and Progress, LIAD Open House, Wisconsin Instructional Design System, A Distance Course in the Making*. Open to all in the George Brown College community. Call ext. 4661 for more information or fax registration to ext. 4768 by April 22.

April 29 Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m. Call ext. 4472 if you plan to attend.

May 13 Board of Governors meeting, 5:30 p.m. Call ext. 4472 if you plan to attend.

May 22 Staff seminar: *Communications Skills Workshop: Positive Public Interaction*, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. For information call Linda Purser at ext. 4661.

We welcome success stories about you or your colleagues. Deadline for submissions for the May issue is April 30.

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